



PRESS RELEASE



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New Local Shelter Helps Women Stay in Their Community

NIAGARA FALLS, Ontario, June 24, 2005 — After years of planning and extensive renovations, the YWCA St. Catharines celebrated the official opening of its shelter project in Niagara Falls today. The newly opened shelter offers 20 emergency beds for women and their children. The facility was made possible with funding of \$625,000 from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)'s Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP).

"The opening of this shelter in Niagara Falls demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to address housing and support needs for women and their children at risk," said the Honourable Walt Lastewka, Parliamentary Secretary and Member of Parliament for St. Catharines, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "This building is a visible sign of the Government of Canada's concern for the disadvantaged and vulnerable people of our society."

Additional funds for restoration came from the Branscombe Family Foundation (\$35,000) and Canadian Tire Financial Services (\$25,000). Ongoing operations are funded by the City of Niagara Falls, the Regional Municipality of Niagara Falls, the Province of Ontario and the United Way of Niagara Falls. Start-up and outreach services are supported by YWCA Canada and the Niagara Community Foundation.

"Women and children in need of emergency shelter will no longer have to travel out of town to seek refuge," said Nancy Iannizzi, Board President, YWCA St. Catharines. "The YWCA is looking forward to helping Niagara Falls women and their families to improve their quality of life as our organization strives to increase the overall health of the community."

The YWCA shelter offers safe emergency housing, meals, and crisis intervention. With no emergency shelter available in Niagara Falls, local women and their children had to move out of their community for housing services. The YWCA of St. Catharines stepped in and turned a closed and dilapidated shelter into a safe haven.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program offers financial assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for women and their children, youth and men who are victims of family violence. Funding is also available for the acquisition or construction of new shelters and second stage housing.

CMHC is Canada's national housing agency with a mandate to help Canadians gain access to safe, quality and affordable housing. CMHC supports the Canadian housing industry and improves the living conditions of Canadians through its activities in mortgage loan insurance and securitization, assisted housing, research and information transfer and the promotion of Canadian housing exports.

For further information, please contact:

Angelina Ritacco,
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
416-218-3332